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It should be noted, further, that the adoption of the geometric mean involves the advantage, in the case of exceptional upward movements of one or a few articles, of reducing the extent of their disturbing influence upon the general average. In other words, the utility of the geometric mean is the diminished liability, compared with the arithmetic mean, of the result being unduly affected by extremely high prices—possibly dependent on a temporary cause. Thus, in the cited example of the series 6, 8 and 20, the substitution of the arithmetic mean of H'33 brings down the importance of the exceptional element of 20 by 43J per cent, while the geometric mean diminishes its disturbing effect by the higher percentage of about 50|. But notwithstanding the superior theoretical claims of the geometric method the practical consideration of the facility and simplicity of the arithmetic mean must not be neglected; and in investigations, generally, it must be remembered that minute accuracy is impracticable, and that a superior theoretical method may often be found to involve a waste of time when it is applied to data which in themselves are, from the nature of the case, more or less infected with errors and discrepancies which cannot reasonably be avoided. Indeed, it may be expressed as a statistical canon that the more extensive and complicated be the facts which we seek to unravel and understand, the more decisively does an assumed decimal exactness proclaim its own imbecility of result. As actual comment upon these observations, the following figures may be cited, which Mr. Sauerbeck obtained for three separate years by the employment of different methods—

	Index Numbers* for		
	One year.	Another year.	A. third year.
By the geometric mean .	60-4	60'9	87
By the exact arithmetic mean	62-1	62-9	87'8
By using an average with allowances for the quantities of the different commodities	60-8	62	87-3

It is evident, then, that in inquiries of this

nature, which